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| APPLICATION NO. | FILING DATE | FIRST NAMED INVENTOR  | ATTORNEY DOCKET NO. | CONFIRMATION NO. |
|-----------------|-------------|-----------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| 10/743,937      | 12/23/2003  | Thomas G. Sierakowski | Liner-602           | 9370             |

7590 09/13/2005

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| EXAMINER |
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BLANKENSHIP, GREGORY A

|          |              |
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| ART UNIT | PAPER NUMBER |
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3612

DATE MAILED: 09/13/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

# Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/743,937

Applicant(s)

SIERAKOWSKI ET AL.

Examiner

Greg Blankenship

Art Unit

3612

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

## Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

## Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on amendment filed 7/14/2005.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

## Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-3,7,11,15,17 and 20-29 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☒ Claim(s) 1-3,7,11,15,17 and 20 is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 21-23 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 24-29 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

## Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 23 December 2003 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

## Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- \* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

## Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## DETAILED ACTION

### *Allowable Subject Matter*

1. The indicated allowability of claims 21-23 is withdrawn in view of the newly discovered reference(s) to Darbshire (6,328,364). Rejections based on the newly cited reference(s) follow.

### *Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102*

2. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

3. Claims 21 and 22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Darbshire (6,328,364).

Darbshire discloses a vehicle bed liner (300) having a substantially flat member with an outer boundary that defines sides. Ribs (315) are arranged in three arrays, as shown in Figure 9. One array is arranged in a central part of the flat member and extends along the longitudinal axis of the bed liner (300). One array is arranged on each side of the central part's array. Each of these arrays includes obliquely extending ribs (315) that extend to the outer boundary. Several materials are disclosed that can form the bed liner including plastic (column 4, lines 19-31). In reference to claim 22, the substantially flat portion of the liner (300) is the liner's bottom. The array of ribs in the central part extends substantially from a front boundary to a rear boundary. The other arrays of ribs are formed in a mirror image of one another with respect to the central part's array of ribs.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

4. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

5. Claim 23 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Darbshire (6,328,364) in view of Vitoorapakorn (6,692,054).

Darbshire does not disclose one of a front wall or tailgate having ribs identical to the ones on the liner bottom.

Vitoorapakorn teaches ribs that are arranged on a tailgate liner in an identical pattern as that on the liner bottom (5), as shown in Figure 3. The array of ribs on the tailgate liner extend to the boundary on the side adjacent the liner bottom such that the ribs on the tailgate liner line up with the ribs on the liner bottom.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to add a tailgate liner having arrays of ribs that extend to the tailgate liner's boundary and are identical in appearance to the arrays of the liner bottom of Darbshire, as taught by Vitoorapakorn, to increasing protection of the tailgate while improving aesthetics of the vehicle.

***Allowable Subject Matter***

6. Claims 1-3, 7, 11, 15, 17 and 20 are allowed.

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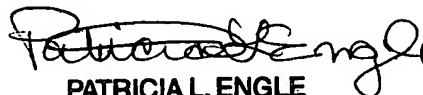
7. Claims 24-29 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Greg Blankenship whose telephone number is 571-272-6656.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Glenn Dayoan can be reached on 571-272-6659. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

gab  
September 6, 2005

  
PATRICIA L. ENGLE  
PRIMARY EXAMINER  
Art Unit 3612